

Hawaii MARINE

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1/3 boards Essex to Japan



Staff Sgt. J. D. Cress

Marines and Sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit are transported by a Landing Craft Utility to the well deck of the Amphibious Assault Ship USS Essex (LHD-2) to prepare for the unit's redeployment to its home base in Okinawa, Japan. The MEU, serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since September 2004, includes Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, assigned to MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

Staff Sgt. J.D. Cress

31st MEU

KUWAIT NAVAL BASE, Kuwait — The Marines and Sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit boarded three ships of the U.S. Navy's Essex Amphibious Ready Group Monday to prepare for a four-week voyage back home to Okinawa, Japan.

The 31st MEU conducted security and stabilization operations in the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility from September 2004 to February 2005. The MEU was assigned to the 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force.

The 2,200-member MEU was responsible for a wide range of missions including assistance and security for Iraq's first free elections, limited-scale raids against the insurgency, civil affairs missions, Iraqi border security and training of Iraqi Security Forces. Additionally, the Navy and Marine Corps team also participated in other operations that were necessary to further stabilize the area, in support of the Interim Iraq Government.

The 31st MEU, a Marine Air Ground Task Force, is comprised of Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment from MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay; Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (Reinforced); MEU Service Support Group 31; and the MEU Command Element. It was the command element that was responsible for command and control of the MEU that was dispersed throughout a 33,000 square-mile area of operations in the western Al Anbar province.

See 31ST MEU, A-8

3rd Radio returns after 14 months

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Press Chief

After 14 months of being deployed, 24 Marines with Alpha Company, 3rd Radio Battalion made a safe return to Kaneohe Bay Feb. 22 and 25.

In November of 2003, the Marines left Kaneohe Bay and headed to a five-month work up in California, which prepared them for the eight-and-a-half months they spent in Iraq.

"It was a very long deployment," laughs Capt. Brian B. Wilcox, officer-in-charge, Radio Battalion Detachment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "Everyone is relieved to be back."

The experience of being in Iraq, explained Wilcox, is something that will stay with each of the Marines for the rest of their lives.

See 3RD RADIO, A-8

A general's speech



Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Gen. Michael W. Hagee (right), commandant of the Marine Corps, answers a question about quality of life to the Marines and Sailors of MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, during his visit Friday. After a brief speech, mostly concerning small-unit leadership by Hagee, Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada (left), sergeant major of the Marine Corps, spoke shortly about the history and future of the Corps, and upholding its standards. Both entertained questions from the crowd, which ranged from topics about barracks functionality to the future of combat gear to the popularity of digital camouflage utilities.

Beach recreation policies change

Ed Hanlon V

MCCS Marketing

Marine Corps Base Hawaii is home to some of Oahu's most beautiful and recreationally inviting beaches. The policies that have been in place regulating recreational activities have been recently modernized in an effort to ensure that beach usage can be maximized while still maintaining an appropriate level of safety.

"We simply looked at the existing regulations and asked how they could be better," said Harry Sprague, water safety manager for Marine Corps Community Services, MCB Hawaii. "We found a few areas that could be updated without jeopardizing safety, got input from the base community and the proposals had some really positive reactions."

The primary change in policy deals with authorized patronage. The previous regulation dictated that an authorized cardholder was limited to sponsoring two guests. The new regulation allows authorized patrons to sponsor up to three guests. To sponsor a guest, patrons must be 18 or older.

The next change encompasses the acceptance of pets on the beaches. The previous regulation established that dogs are limited to only North Beach during designated hours. The new rule allows dogs on every MCB Hawaii beach, but limits the timeframe from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., daily.

A minor change has been made that deals with using the buddy system when entering the water. Patrons are still highly encouraged to use the buddy system; however, a person swimming alone is now allowed to enter the water if there are others

Seaman receives NAM for assisting with truck fire

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Press Chief

"I think we went through five fire extinguishers," remarked Seaman Daniel R. Wilson, aviation technician, Marine Aviation Logistic Squadron 24. If there is something on fire, you do all you can to put out the flames and that is what we did."

Wilson, who is no stranger to aiding in unusual or dangerous situations, used to be a lifeguard and has helped save lives in the past. He credits his success to being able to act swiftly and stay calm under trying conditions.

Luckily, during an incident on MCB Hawaii, Dec. 7, 2004, no one needed to be rescued, but his quick thinking and speedy actions prevented a truck fire from turning into an inferno.

According to Wilson, who volunteers as an assistant scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 425 on Tuesdays, it was during one of their meetings that

the smell of something burning began to seep into the building, located next door to the 7-Day Store.

Lt. Col. Walter R. Watson, commanding officer, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24; Petty Officer 1st Class Larry Cummins, aviation structural mechanic, and Wilson went into the parking lot to investigate.

"We noticed there was a truck on fire," said the 21-year-old, Bremerton, Wash. native. "So we ran over to make sure no one was inside."

After finding no one inside, they ran into the 7-Day Store, told the clerks what was going on and told them to call the fire department. Then they grabbed a couple fire extinguishers, went back to the parking lot and began spraying down the truck.

Wilson explained that they had to make a few trips back into the 7-Day store to get more fire extinguishers because they ran out so quickly.

"Once the fire was nearly out, the fire department showed up and took control of the situation."



Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Brig. Gen. Duane D. Thiessen, commanding general, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, congratulates Seaman Daniel R. Wilson after presenting him with the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his Dec. 7, 2004 actions.

After all the commotion, an individual came outside and claimed the vehicle. He said he didn't hear what was going on outside, but he did smell a strong odor of fuel as he was walking toward the store.

"We just did what anyone else would have done

See FIRE, A-7

See BEACHES, A-8

See page A-2 for information on the memorial service for fallen 1/3 Marines at the State Capitol.

NEWS BRIEFS

Base to Host Close of Makahiki

The closing ceremonies of the 2004-2005 Makahiki Season will be held on MCB Hawaii, Saturday and Sunday, as local families gather to pay tribute in traditional fashion on Mokapu Peninsula. Saturday morning, Keahiakahoe Canoe Club canoes will cross Kaneohe Bay, bearing the “akua loa” (symbol of Makahiki) from Kuoloa Beach Park to Hale Koa Beach area. Mokapu Elementary students will join the Makahiki celebrants in a canoe-welcoming ceremony at the landing site. There will be ancient Hawaiian chants, a talk story and hula performances. Before dawn on Sunday, the “akua loa” will be moved by procession from Hale Koa Beach to Pyramid Rock where traditional sunrise ceremonies will mark the end of the Makahiki season.

New Nimitz Road/Detour Plan

Nimitz Road will be closed from March 21 to March 25. There will be “road closed” signs at the following streets.

- Nimitz Road entrance (intersection of Nimitz Road and Reeves Road)
- Other end of Nimitz Road (Corner of Halligan Road and Nimitz Road)
- Halligan Road (intersection of Halligan Road and Nimitz Road)

The projected end date is March 24, however, that is subject to change. There will be a partial lane closure which will still allow two-way vehicular access from Monday through March 16 to facilitate curb/gutter removal and replacement.

The point of contact is Marc Wong, Construction Management Engineer, 257-1116.

Red Cross to Recognize Volunteers

The American Red Cross will be honoring their volunteers for their services in 2004 and will be having a luncheon on March 14 at the Staff Non-Commissioned Officers Club, Building 3088, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Battle of Iwo Jima 60th Anniversary Ceremony

At 2 p.m. on March 16, Iwo Jima veterans, returning from a 60th anniversary reunion at the tiny speck of an island that brought so many casualties to both sides, will be honored at a ceremony at the Pacific War Memorial, located on Marine Corps Base Hawaii. This ceremony will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, and is open to the public. This date also marks the third anniversary of the dedication of The Pacific War Memorial, which pays tribute to all who have served and continue to serve our great nation.

A luncheon will be held for active duty Marines and Iwo Jima veterans at 11:45 a.m. at the MCB Hawaii's dining facility, Anderson Hall.

For further information call Mrs. Sarah Fry at MCB Hawaii Public Affairs Office 257-8832.

Triathlon may Cause Delays

The 4th Annual Lanikai Triathlon will be held, March 20, in Kailua and aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. MCB Hawaii support for the event will include the closing of Mokapu Road to through traffic from 5 to 9 a.m. on race day, Sunday, from the back gate to the intersection of Mokapu Road and Harris Street. Traffic will be routed to minimize impact on residents. Appropriate event signs and traffic control points will be posted.

Professor, Author to Speak on Global Relations

Dr. Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, PhD, will be at the MCB Hawaii Theater at 1 p.m., March 29, to present a lecture on, “The Effects of the GWOT and Militant Islam on China-U.S. Relations.” There will be a question and answer period following the lecture.

ICE Correction

In contrast to earlier published information, there is no “Business Management Hotline” for Interactive Customer Evaluation and the Web site address is ice.disa.mil.

Hawaii Marine Staff

MCB Hawaii, Public Affairs

The commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, will sponsor a memorial service Monday to honor 27 Marines and one Sailor from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, killed in while deployed in support of the War on Terrorism in Iraq. The service will be held in the Rotunda of the Hawaii State Capitol, at 235 South Beretania St., in Honolulu, beginning at 1 p.m. Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle and Lieutenant General Wallace C. Gregson, MARFORPAC commander, will speak at the memorial



service, with music by the Marine Forces Pacific Band and the Honolulu Symphony String Duet. The service will also include inspirational readings and honors to the fallen. The public is invited and encouraged to attend. As parking at the Capitol is limited, public transportation to and from the service is highly recommended. For more information, contact Mr. Chuck Little of Marine Forces Pacific Public Affairs at 477-8309.

Transportation for MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay participants

Those planning to attend should contact

their 1st sergeant or sergeant major. For more information on the memorial service, visit www.mcbh.usmc.mil.

Directions

For those driving to the ceremony from MCB Hawaii, the best route is to go toward Honolulu via the H-3, take Exit 11 and turn left (east) on Kamehameha Highway (Highway 83), then right (south) on Pali Highway (Highway 61). Take the Punchbowl Street ramp toward Lusitana Street, when the road forks, take the right-hand lane onto Punchbowl Street, and turn right onto South Beretania Street. The Capitol will be on the left.

Moving on



Petty Officer 1st Class Evelyn P. Haywood

Adm. Thomas B. Fargo (right) salutes Adm. William J. Fallon (left) as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard B. Myers looks on, during the U.S. Pacific Command change of command ceremony aboard Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii. Fallon relieves Fargo to become the 21st Commander, U.S. Pacific Command. U.S. PACOM's area of responsibility spans from the west coast of the United States to the east coast of Africa. PACOM, established Jan. 1, 1947, was located in the Makalapa Compound on Oahu and moved to Camp Smith October of 1957.

GSA travel card information lost

Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — About 900,000 Defense Department employees may be affected by Bank of America's loss and the possible compromise of government travel card information, Pentagon officials said Friday.

The General Services Administration and Bank of America notified DoD that GSA “SmartPay” travel cards are affected. Officials said Bank of America has been monitoring the affected accounts and there has been no evidence of fraud or misuse of the accounts.

Bank of America is sending letters to affected employees. “Information regarding travel card program accounts for individual card holders has been lost, and it is possible that that information has been compromised, though we don't believe that that is the case,” said Teresa McKay, the Defense

Department's deputy chief financial officer.

The U.S. Secret Service is conducting the investigation, with help from the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. Officials said that although there has been no evidence of criminal activity, release of details on the circumstances of the loss could jeopardize the investigation.

“Indications right now are that it is an accidental event,” McKay said. “The bank has been monitoring the accounts involved from the onset, and to date there has been no indication of fraudulent activity.”

The information is personal cardholder information — names, Social Security numbers, addresses and account numbers — on magnetic tape. The loss occurred in late December. GSA notified DoD on Jan. 19. McKay said the delay was necessary to protect the integrity of the investigation.

“The bank is in the process of notifying cardholders of the situation,” McKay said. “They will be given a special customer serv-

ice number that has been set up by the bank specifically for this purpose. If (cardholders) have any questions, they can contact the bank. If they would like, they may request that the bank cancel the card and reissue a card to them.”

McKay added that consumers should always keep an eye on any credit accounts they have. “It's always prudent for any cardholder to monitor their monthly statements (and) dispute any charges they may question, and also it's important for all of us to get a credit report at least once a year and look at the content of that report,” she said.

Bank of America has set up a hotline for those affected. The number is (800) 493-8444. Cardholders who notice irregularities in their accounts should call the Bank of America at the 800 number printed on the back of their cards, McKay said. “If you are an affected cardholder, you may contact Bank of America for information on obtaining a free credit report,” she added.

Veterans centers offer grief counseling

Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — In an unprecedented expansion of its traditional client base, the Department of Veterans Affairs is offering grief counseling to families of service members who die while on active duty.

VA's Office of Readjustment Counseling offers the counseling services at its 206 community-based Veteran Centers throughout the United States, including Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Greg Harms, program analyst for the counseling program, said 412 military family members — from spouses to children to siblings, parents and even grandparents — have taken advantage of the program as they struggle to cope with the loss of their 276 service members. Most were killed during deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Expanding its services to serve veterans' families represents “quite a leap and a real innovation” for the VA, acknowledged Charles Flora, associate program director. But he calls the offering of bereavement counseling to family members “a natural extension of what we already do for veterans.”

Flora asked, who is more deserving of VA assistance than families who have sacrificed their husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters or grandchildren in support of their country?

The program also serves families of reservists and National Guardsmen who die while activated for federal duty.

Some families seek the VA's counseling services immediately after learning of their loved ones' loss. Others wait until later, often after an important milestone such as a birthday, holiday or the one-year anniversary of the death has passed, Harms said.

“Everyone grieves differently. It runs the full gamut,” he said. “There are no standard operating procedures for grief.”

As a result, services offered run the full range, from one- or two-time visits to weekly sessions, depending on the family member's needs.

Regardless of the level of help needed, the VA service offers all its clients a common variable: a safe, caring environment where a professional bereavement counselor helps them work through the emotional and psychological issues associated with their loss.

“They're looking for support, looking for someone they can talk to who will listen and understand,” Harms said.

“A lot of what people need,” added Flora, “is a place where they can sit down, take a breath and tell their story in a calm place where they can put things into perspective.”

While all grief counselors are able to provide that service, the Veteran Centers provide something many clients call a big plus: More than half the staff at the centers are veterans themselves who understand the military lifestyle as well as the tremendous sacrifices the families have made.

Counselors go out of their way to respond to families' needs, often meeting with them the same day they're contacted. They keep clinics open late to accommodate families'

schedules and network with other service organizations to reach families in need. And in some cases, they even make home visits for families who might otherwise not be able to tap into their services.

“We've made a science of overcoming every obstacle to care,” Flora said.

No medical diagnosis is required to seek help, and services are completely confidential. The only way a counselor can share information on a case is with written permission of the family member. Harms said, “There's guaranteed clinical confidentiality.”

According to Flora, he considers the services the Veteran Centers provide grieving military families “a sacred trust” that reflects the VA's commitment to veterans and their families. “We're meeting these families at one of the most traumatic points in their lives and helping to assist the family as it rebuilds itself,” he said. “This is sacred business.”

Referrals for grief counseling come through military casualty assistance offices, the VA and veterans service organizations. The largest number of referrals comes from TAPS, the nonprofit Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, which offers what Harms calls “incredible peer-to-peer support” but no professional bereavement counseling services.

Families requesting more information or services can also contact the VA's Readjustment Counseling Service directly at (202) 273-9116 or by e-mail at vet.center@hq.med.va.gov.

Hawaii's Veteran's Center, located at 459 Patterson Road, Honolulu, can be reached at 433-0600.

Hawaii MARINE

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Cpl. Nicholis Syron, tower block NCO, Headquarters Battalion, aims in with the M-16 A2 service rifle in the prone position at the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.



Staff Sgt. James Dabney, pistol range, range control and ISMT officer-in-charge, observes how Cpl. Nicholis Syron shoots the pistol at the ISMT.

'Hit me with your best shot ... fire away'

ISMT improves shooters' skills

**Story and Photos By
Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson**
Combat Correspondent

As one of many qualifications that Marines have to maintain every year, being successful on the rifle range can sometimes be the most challenging. Over the years, the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer has been created to improve the Marines chance of success once on the firing line.

The system is intended to improve a Marine's marksmanship skills with a variety of weapons. The indoor system can create inclement weather on the screen and provide "tracers" so the shooter knows exactly where he shot. The system also marks where the weapon was pointed right before being fired. This allows the shooter to see whether they are jerking the trigger or making some other form of movement.

Here at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, every detail on the rifle range has anywhere from five to 15 Marines going to the ISMT to improve their skills, according to Cpl. Nicholis Syron, tower block non-commissioned officer, Headquarters Battalion.

"The coaches identify each problem shooter, along with what their weaknesses are," said the Tampa, Fla. native. "From there, we can just focus on those problem areas until we correct them."

Having the ability to work with the shooter, one-on-one, is another great benefit to the ISMT, said Syron. The range coaches can't constantly help out someone who may need it, because they have a whole group to tend to.

While in the \$.25 million system, shooters go through a variety of drills, but mainly focus on the points that give them the most problems when shooting.

"With the pistol, changing magazines at the 15-yard line seems to be the most difficult for a lot of people," said Syron. "With the M-16, the 300-yard line, rapid fire, or having to make wind calls appears to be the hardest."

Although all Marines are welcome to go to the ISMT, most don't because they feel like it's going to be a waste of



Cpl. Nicholis Syron reloads the pistol at the newly updated ISMT.

their time, according to Staff Sgt. James Dabney, pistol range, range control and ISMT officer in charge with Headquarters Battalion. The Knoxville, Tenn. native has been working on the K-Bay range for three years and said he can see an improvement with the shooters who attend the ISMT for help.

"Honestly, someone would be surprised at how many good shooters we have coming into the ISMT," said Dabney. "In my opinion, I feel the ISMT should be incorporated into the 'Grass Week' before shooters actually get out on the firing line."

As time goes on, the ISMT continues to get updated as well, said Dabney.

"We've had the system for about four years now, and just in December we've made updates with it," said Dabney. "With new software always being available, things are always changing."

Lance Cpl. Erik Moreno, unit diary clerk, Headquarters Battalion, has used the ISMT during his time on the rifle range and feels it did help him.

"In the ISMT, I was able to take my time and work out whatever I was doing wrong," said the Alexandria, Va. native. "Regardless of how you shoot, there's no harm in going. It can only improve you."



Cpl. Nicholis Syron aims in with the M-16 A2 service rifle in the prone position at the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer. The ISMT gives shooters a chance to work one-on-one with coaches, identifying and improving problem areas.



Cpl. Nicholis Syron looks at his shot group with Staff Sgt. James Dabney, pistol range, range control and ISMT OIC.

Lava Dogs head home from Iraq

Gunnery Sgt. Claudia LaMantia
Public Affairs Chief

Nine months after leaving Oahu and participating in some of the most intense battles of Operation Iraqi Freedom II, the Marines and Sailors of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines are heading home.

Monday they boarded U. S. Navy ships that will bring them back to Okinawa. Once the ships reach Japan, the Marines will fly back home to Oahu. From Kuwait, several members of the unit spoke via telephone with a few reporters in Kaneohe Bay.

The Lava Dogs of 3rd Marine Division arrived in Iraq last fall and immediately brought the fight to the insurgents, said Lt. Col. Mike Ramos, commanding officer. During the month-long battle, his men fought and proved themselves time and again.

“To see the sheer bravery; the courage under fire; the patriotism of these men, has been awesome,” Ramos said. To have been part of such a group of men was “the opportunity of a lifetime.”

Ramos recalled a day that’s ingrained in his mind during the early stages of Operation Al Fajr where his men fought to rid the city of

Fallujah from insurgents.

“On 10 November, we found ourselves in battle. We’d penetrated the northern part of the city. Fighting a fanatical enemy, my Marines winning decisively and fiercely,” Ramos said.

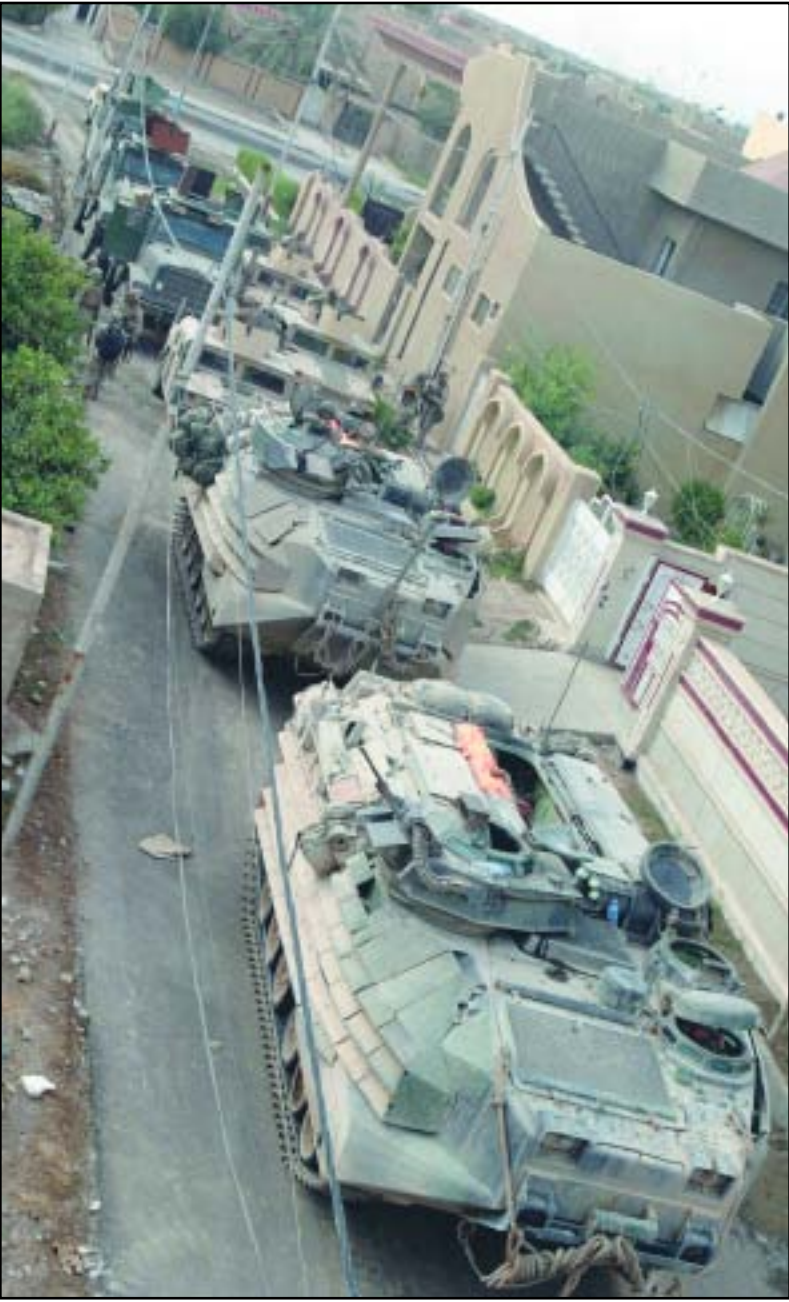
In the heat of battle, as night fell, Ramos and his men took a few minutes to do something that all Marines around the world do as part of the Marine Corps’ Birthday celebration.

“The sergeant major took a piece of pound cake [from an MRE] and cut it with a Marine Corps issued K-Bar. The sergeant major gave a piece to the youngest Marine [20-year-old Lance Cpl. Cody Branham] and then ate the other piece [as he was the oldest one present],” Ramos added.

An Army psychological operations team then played the Marine Corps Hymn over loud speakers — as loud as they could.

“The insurgents were a little upset that we had the audacity to play our song, and they opened fire again on us,” Ramos said. “But that was okay, because we had more than enough fire power and it was a beautiful thing to see tracers across the night from numerous Marine positions, silencing the insurgents that interrupted our ceremony.”

“This memory I’ll take with me the rest of my life,” he added.



Lance Cpl. Will Lathrop

Amphibious Assault Vehicles from AAV platoon, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, re-supply Company B, BLT, 1/3, with chow, water and ammunition in the streets of Fallujah. The “tracks” played a vital role in the Marines’ push through the city by providing troop transport, fire support, medevacs and resupply missions.



Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook



Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook

Above — Marines with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, jump from rooftop to rooftop during their advance on an insurgent stronghold in Fallujah.

Above Center — 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Lava Dogs enter Fallujah on Nov. 8, 2004 for Operation Al Fajr. The operation was designed to oust all insurgents intent on disrupting the reconstruction of Iraq.



Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook

Two days before entering the city of Fallujah for Operation Al Fajr, Marines with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, run through urban warfare tactics as Amphibious Assault Vehicles receive final maintenance checks.

During this combat deployment the unit lost 46 men and several dozens were wounded.

The bloodiest day came on Jan. 26 when members of the battalion were heading toward the western Iraqi border to aid in the election process. A CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter crashed while taking them to their mission and 26 Marines and a Sailor were killed.

“These men were like brothers to me,” Ramos added. “They had gone through one of the most important battles of this war. Many of those men had been wounded in action and many stayed despite their wounds.”

The battalion continued with heavy hearts and successfully finished their mission. They prepare for the trek to Okinawa and are scheduled to arrive there at the beginning of April. A few weeks after they arrive in Japan, they will start heading back to Oahu after repairing some of their war-torn equipment, according to Sgt. Maj. Michael Berg, the battalion sergeant major.

This deployment is nearing the end for this Hawaii-based unit, but work in Iraq continues.

“There are many good things happening [in Iraq],” Ramos said. “One thing that made this worthwhile was being able to provide the Iraqi people with ‘an opportunity to live with dignity.’”

Two battalions are still in the city of Fallujah, aiding in the restoration of whatever damage resulted from recent battles. The reactions from the city residents are mixed. But the elections are a sign of hope, according to Ramos who added, “If it can be done in Fallujah it can be done anywhere.”

Drill instructors turn recruits into Marines

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Community Relations Chief

(Editor's Note: This is part two of a three-part series on B-Billets, a term used to describe a 36-month assignment that Marines serve in that is outside of their Military Occupational Specialty, and a position that is often vital for rank promotion in the Corps. This story focuses on Drill instructor duty.)

"I am Gunnery Sgt. Hartman, your Senior drill instructor. From now on, you will speak only when spoken to, and the first and last words out of your filthy sewers will be 'Sir!'" Do you maggots understand that?" — Gunnery Sgt. Hartman (Boot Camp — Day One)

Many recruits have a preconceived notion of drill instructors and boot camp before they even step on the yellow footprints, courtesy of former Marine R. Lee Ermey's role as Gunnery Sgt. Hartman in Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam era film, "Full Metal Jacket."

For the few Marines who've never seen the film, Hartman is a "tough as nails" drill instructor who instills, and literally beats, a love of the Corps into his recruits.

"I'm not going to lie," said former Marine Victor Mendoza, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran who is now a police officer in Sacramento, Calif. "When I first showed up to boot camp, I was scared to death. I kept waiting for one of my DI's to beat the crap out of me."

Mendoza's beating never came, but a love of Corps and a deep respect for his drill instructors did.

"At first you're so caught up in your own little world that you don't realize until much later the amazing job these individuals do," said Mendoza. "Without drill instructors we wouldn't have a Corps. They make Marines."

Drill instructor duty is considered one of the most honored and valued positions a Marine can hold and is absolutely vital to the process of making Marines, according to Master Sgt. Andre Robinson, a Marine Corps career planner.

"If a Marine comes to me and expresses an interest in becoming a drill instructor, one of the first things I inquire about is their physical fitness," said Robinson. "They've got to be in great physical shape and have got to be squared away. But equally important, they must live and breathe our Corps values of honor, courage and commitment."

Marines from 22 to 37 who hold the rank of sergeant through gunnery sergeant can request drill instructor duty. Corporals may be considered — if they will be promoted prior to graduation from Drill Instructor School.

Additionally, Marines must have scored a 90 or higher on the general and technical portion of the Armed Forces Vocational Battery test, must have no adverse Page 11 entries within two years; no alcohol related incidents within three years; no courts-martial within five years; no non-judicial punishments within two years; and must not have filed for bankruptcy within two years; or have divorce or separation proceedings still pending prior to reporting for duty.

After passing the screening process and being selected for the 36-month drill instructor duty tour, a Marine must first attend Drill Instructor School at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, or MCRD Parris Island, S.C.

The 12-week course empha-

sizes leadership, judgment, professionalism, time-management, and, of course, physical fitness.

"It takes a lot of stamina and character to be a drill instructor," said Gunnery Sgt. Rose Cole, who served as a drill instructor from 1996 to 1999. "You have to be able to stay focused on the training, no matter what. The worst part was the long hours and lack of sleep. Drill instructors are up before the recruits and don't hit the rack until long after they are asleep, usually getting about three hours of rest a night for three months."

Still, despite the hardships, Cole says she wouldn't trade her experience as a drill instructor for anything.

"It's a tremendous feeling of accomplishment when you graduate a platoon," said Cole. "You can't help but remember what they were like on that first day of boot camp."

For more information on drill instructor duty, contact your career planner.

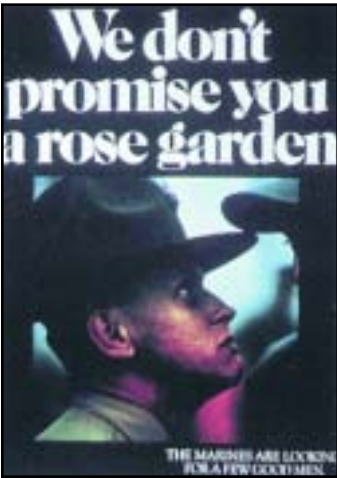
"There is nothing more challenging or satisfying than drill instructor duty," said Cole.

"Today you people are no longer maggots. Today you are Marines. You're part of a brotherhood." — Gunnery Sgt. Hartman — Graduation Day)



Lance Cpl. Edward R. Guevara Jr.

Senior Drill Instructor Staff Sgt. Leopoldo Ruiz, along with Platoon 1147, Company B, practices before the final drill competition of their recruit training. Marine sergeants through gunnery sergeants, wishing to be considered for drill instructor duty, should contact their career planner.



Read the *Hawaii Marine* online at www.mcbh.usmc.mil by clicking on the "Hawaii Marine Newspaper on-line" link.

Gulf War casualties remembered

Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — About 100 family members from as far away as California gathered at Arlington National Cemetery, Feb. 27, to remember the more than 400 Americans who lost their lives during the Gulf War and Operation Provide Comfort.

“This event is one of the most important I attend each year. Each time I find myself deeply moved by the event itself and by the hard work sustaining it,” Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheik Salem al-Sabah said during his keynote address.

The ceremony was highlighted by U.S. Army Band soloist Staff Sgt. Steve Cramer singing “Morning Has Broken” and “On Eagle’s Wings,” accompanied on the piano by Sgt. 1st Class Faffi Kasparian.

Family members of Gulf War casualties led the Pledge of Allegiance, and representatives from each military service read the roll call of families.

Kuwaiti children, escorted by representatives of countries who suffered casualties in the Gulf War, placed flags on a remembrance panel.

Children, nieces and nephews of Gulf War casualties placed white roses at a memorial



Sheikh Salem Abdullah al-Jaber al-Sabah, Kuwait ambassador to the United States, speaks to family members who have lost their loved ones who were killed liberating Kuwait.

stone that reads: “They served with honor. The Persian Gulf 1990-1991. To the brave hearts who gave their lives. May we all know the peace for which they died? Dedicated by No Greater Love, Feb. 25, 1992.”

An Army Band bugler and drummer decked out in Continental Army uniforms played “Taps” following the remembrance wreath laying.

“In our fast-paced society, young people sometimes say events less than 20 years ago are ancient history,” Sabah said. “This happens far less in my part of the world, since Middle Easterners are rarely accused of having short memories.”

He said Arabs think along the lines of William Faulkner, who wrote, “The past isn’t dead. In fact, it isn’t even past.”

“As even casual visitors will tell you, when you make friends with someone from the Arab world, you probably have a new friend for life,” the ambassador noted. “Friendships, once made, are deeply cherished.

“Nowhere is this more true than in the case of Kuwait’s liberation,” Sabah said. “In 1991, America led the international coalition that liberated Kuwait, and the Kuwaiti people will never — can never — forget it. Kuwait’s government and its people will always remember how the U.S. armed forces reversed Saddam Hussein’s aggression and



Children, nieces and nephews of Gulf War casualties place white roses at the memorial stone in Section 60 where service members are buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Placing of the white roses was part of the 14th Annual Remembrance Ceremony honoring those killed during the war.

restored Kuwait’s rightful sovereignty.”

Sabah noted that America and Kuwait were friends and partners before the 1991 liberation. “The Gulf War,” he said, “a conflict in which Americans and Kuwaitis fought alongside each other and left blood on the battlefield propelled the U.S.-Kuwait relationship to a whole new level.”

He said this was symbolized last year when the Bush administration designated Kuwait as a major non-NATO ally.

Sabah said it’s chilling to imagine what the world might have been like if the U.S.-led coalition had not reversed Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.

“If Kuwait had been annexed and Iraq’s ambitions left unchallenged, Saddam Hussein’s million-man army would have likely continued its conquests,” he noted. “The world’s inaction in the face of such blatant aggression would have inspired other aggressors and fostered global anarchy.

“In this context, American sacrifices stopped the emergence of a darker, more dangerous world where ‘might makes right’ and international law is a nothing but a paper tiger,” Sabah said.

He said that Saddam remained dangerous when the Gulf War’s major land campaign ceased. “This required the continuing presence and vigilance of the U.S. military to ensure the region’s stability and security,” the ambassador said.

Despite being under America’s watchful eye, Saddam’s defiance continued throughout the 1990s. Then, in the post-Sept. 11 world, his noncompliance with the will of the international community had to be addressed, the sheikh noted.

Sabah went on to say that Saddam posed an ongoing challenge and the world community faced a choice. “I could either downplay the dangers or face them squarely,” he said. “America’s leadership and armed forces faced this challenge. ...”

With Iraq’s liberation, he said, a central Arab country has rejoined the international community. The Iraqi people can now decide their own destiny.

“American leadership and sacrifices have restored freedoms to long denied Iraq’s proud and gifted people,” Sabah said. “But what sadly cannot be restored are the sacrifices made on behalf of these freedoms. Every sacrifice is important, but it’s particularly tragic when someone pays the ultimate price while serving his or her country. And nothing anyone does or says can bring back a loved one who is no longer with us. But what we can do is honor the memories of the fallen.

“Let me assure you that your loved ones are remembered not only by Americans, but also in my country,” Sabah said. “On behalf of Kuwait’s people and government, I extend our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude.”



Army band members in Continental Army uniforms stand ready to play “Taps” at the 14th Annual Remembrance Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Feb. 27.

Dress Blues “A” uniform to keep honorable reput

Cpl. Susan Smith
MCB Quantico

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — Patriotism, pride, honor, courage, commitment, strength and loyalty are just a few of the traits commonly associated with the United States Marine Corps Dress Blue “A” uniform. In the past, Marines have worn the blues when performing the difficult task of notifying a deceased service member’s next of kin. As of Feb. 9, in accordance with Marine

Administrative Message 057/05, the uniform for casualty notification and assistance is the Service “A” uniform. “When people look at us in our blues, they think ‘Wow. That’s a Marine,’” said Gunnery Sgt. Cindy Grubb, operations chief for the Headquarters Marine Corps casualty branch. “We want to keep that positive image of the blues.” “A negative connotation has been attached to Marines in the dress blue uniform because of death notifications,” according to the

MarAdmin. “This is contrary to the pride and tradition of the dress blue uniform.” The MarAdmin is the result of an abundance of comments made by Marines who served as casualty assistance calls officers. “We’ve been receiving comments from Marines who have made the notifications,” said Grubb. “They said that people are starting to relate the dress blues to bad news.” Out of the many comments, one particular letter caused the push for change, she added. “The association of dress blues and bad news

should not be something the Marine Corps should be promoting, unintentionally or not,” said 1st Sgt. Stephen A. Thomas, Inspector and Instructor staff Greensboro, N.C., in a letter to the Commander of Marine Forces Reserve.

The letter gave a personal example of the negative connotation to which the MarAdmin refers.

“A few months ago, we had parents here that (Inspector and Instructor staff Greensboro) did CACO duty for, and I was on my way to a community event with recruiters in (the Dress Blue “D” uniform),” he recalled in his letter. “As soon as the mother saw me, she immediately had this horrible look on her face and asked me if I was going to deliver ‘bad news.’”

Such negative encounters helped to prove the need for the uniform switch, Grubb.

Since all Marines are issued and required to maintain Service “A’s,” the switch from the dress blues will not cause any difficulty.

Although the next of kin



Sgt. Michael Freeman

Staff Sgt. John McIntire, staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge of Recruiting Substation Bend, Ore., shows off his Dress Blues “A” uniform, which is no longer used to notify a deceased Marine’s next-of-kin.

notification must be conducted in alphas, burial ceremonies will still be performed in dress blues.

“There is nothing more important than taking care of our Marines and their families, especially if the Marine has given the ultimate sacrifice,” said Thomas. “I believe we should honor our Marines in blues, not deliver the bad news.”



Sgt. Michael Hjelmstad

Marines from Marine Corps Forces Europe are shown in Service “A” uniforms, which is now the uniform Marines wear when notifying a deceased service member’s next of kin.

MCB Hawaii holds prayer breakfast

Hawaii Marine Staff
MCB Hawaii, Public Affairs

Anderson Hall Dining Facility was the site of K-Bay’s National Prayer Breakfast, Feb. 24. Military and family members, friends and visitors all gathered for a morning of song, prayer and scripture. To set the scene, members of the Marine Forces Pacific Band’s brass quintet played softly in the back of the room, as chaplains, guest speakers and singers took time away from their everyday routines to participate in the morning’s events. The guest speaker for the occasion was Navy Capt. Stephen J. Linehan, command chaplain, MCB Hawaii. Col. Richard C. Roten, deputy commander, MCB, Hawaii, also gave remarks at the breakfast, incorporating some of his personal experiences in the Marine Corps that related to faith. The event concluded with the song “Eternal Father, Strong to Save,” and a benediction by Navy Lt. Daniel C. Whitaker, command chaplain.



Photos By Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Relationship advice

Left — Silke B. Hagge, wife of the commandant of the Marine Corps General Michael W. Hagee, speaks with military spouses, Friday, at the Staff NCO club on MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. Mrs. Hagge gave advice about relationships and the situations spouses encounter when the military member is deployed. She also talked about MotoMail, addressed the key volunteer network and expressed her appreciation for the overwhelming support from the general public, saying, “We should say thanks and open our arms to the community and let them help.”

Above — Military spouses listen to Silke B. Hagee talk about relationships.

FIRE, From A-1

in the same situation,” admitted Wilson. “I’m just glad that no one was injured.” Wilson received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for taking part in putting out the truck fire. “No one in our shop was surprised to hear what he had done,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Steven C. Bergeron, leading petty officer, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24. “It sounded like something he would do.” Bergeron explained that from a working perspective, Wilson is efficient and hard working as well as having a great personality. “He is always on time, and upbeat,” said the Fremont, Calif. native. “He gets his work done and is always willing to help anyone in the shop out, with anything. How he reacted to the truck fire was very true to his character.”

31ST MEU: Looking forward to being home

From A-1

“The 31st MEU is looking forward to returning to Okinawa,” said Capt. Burrell D. Parmer, MEU spokesperson and native of Monroe, La. “We are proud to have had the opportunity to demonstrate our expeditionary capabilities. The continuous cycles of training in the Asia-Pacific region has prepared us for operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Although we are preparing to head home for a much deserved rest and to share timed missed with our love ones, we must continue to be ready to serve as America’s 911 force in the western Pacific.”

Other members of the MEU are looking forward to leaving Kuwait. “I’m real excited,” said Hospital Corpsman Jerod M. Napier, 22, of BLT, 1/3, a native of Orlando, Fla. “This is the first step for us getting closer to home. Our time here was beneficial to the Iraqi people.” According to Sgt. Christopher P. Funk, 23, of BLT, 1/3, he is ready to go home also. “It was awesome to come here and fight for freedom,” admitted the Baltimore, Md. native. “It is a great feeling, leaving here and knowing of what we have accomplished. I’ll return to Hawaii, take leave and spend some time with my family in

Maryland.” The Essex ARG, home-ported in Sasebo, Japan, is comprised of the Amphibious Assault Ship USS Essex (LHD-2), the amphibious transport dock USS Juneau (LPD-10), and the dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD-49). USS Essex (LHD-2) participated in Operation Unified Assistance and provided support and aid to the victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami in Indonesia. “The 31st MEU and the Essex ARG started together, stayed in U.S. Central Command’s area of responsibility together, and will finish together,” said Parmer.

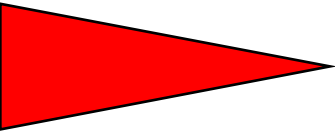


Staff Sgt. J. D. Cress

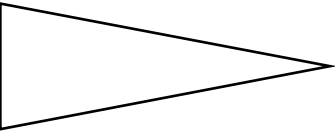
Marines and Sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit board a utility boat assigned to the Essex Amphibious Ready Group, Monday, for a four-week voyage back home to Okinawa, Japan. Marines from 1st Battlion, 3rd Marine Regiment, MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, have been deployed with the MEU in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since September 2004.

BEACHES, From A-1

in the immediate area. Perhaps a more significant change is the approval to let patrons have 24-hour access to the water. Previously, only scuba diving was allowed after sunset. Patrons can now enjoy nighttime water activities, except for when hazardous conditions exist. If you have been to Pyramid Rock Beach or North Beach and have seen the signage for the flag systems, you may have been slightly confused. In an effort to simplify the posting of beach conditions, the Water Safety department has changed the system to mirror notional guidelines and reflect city and county signage, procedures and execution. This means that beachgoers will have the same systems on and off base. When other Oahu beaches with similar conditions to MCB Hawaii’s are closed, MCB Hawaii’s beaches will close as well. “We encourage anyone to call Water Safety or stop by a lifeguard stand for any more information,” invited Sprague. The Water Safety number for MCB Hawaii is 254-7655. For further information, visit www.mccs.hawaii.com.



Red flag = Water is off limits



White flag = Swim at your own risk, no lifeguard is on duty, swimming alone is prohibited

When in doubt, don’t go out!

Did You Know?

According to several Web sites, including users.comkey.net/fussichen/otd_haw.htm and www.scopesys.com/anyday/oranges were first introduced to Hawaii on this date in 1792.

3RD RADIO, From A-1

“Our first stop when we deployed was to Camp Pendleton, California,” began the Castle Rock, Calif. native. “From there we went straight to Al Najaf Providence, Iraq. We stayed there for more than eight months before returning here.” The Al Najaf Providence is roughly 80 miles from Baghdad, Iraq. While overseas, the Marines from 3rd Radio Bn. were a part of the intelligence section and conducted operations for the 11th MEU. “While we were in Iraq, we only really saw one month of actual continuous combat,” said Wilcox. It isn’t every day that women are assigned to a “grunt” unit, but there were three female Marines from 3rd Radio Bn. in the midst of the action. “As females it was okay out there. The grunts really looked out for us,” said Sgt. Leah D. Eberle, signal intel-

ligence, Alpha Company, 3rd Radio. Eberle was a part of a signals intelligence team that provided collection and communication as force protection for the 11th MEU. This was the Liberty Hill, Texas native’s longest deployment she has experienced thus far in her time in the Marine Corps. “It felt like forever,” she said, sighing. “Now that it’s over, it all kinda runs together. But we were gone for such a long time. It was a good experience,” Eberle admitted. “But I wouldn’t be ready to go back out so soon.” Eberle pointed out that the one really positive thing about being on such a long deployment is the feeling you get when you return home. “It was like Christmas,” she said, enthusiastically. “You open all your boxes of your stuff and find things you forgot you had. It was great getting back.”



Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Key volunteers hold up a welcome home sign for the 18 returning Marines from 3rd Radio Battalion who arrived back on K-Bay, Feb. 22 after being deployed for more than 14 months.

California dreamin’



Marines from Headquarters and Service Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, prepare to form it up before boarding a bus in the commissary parking lot. The Marines left MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay for a Combined Arms Exercise in California. The exercise is part of a month-long training work up that will prepare them for their upcoming deployment. This is the Marines’ final major training event before heading overseas. Over the past couple months they have been working with the Special Operations Training Group, Okinawa, Japan, participating in everything from close-quarters combat training to helicopter raids in an effort to better prepare for deployment.

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner